

Permit to Mine – Reclamation

What is reclamation and what is in PolyMet's reclamation plan?

In the context of mining, reclamation is the general term for activities undertaken at a mine to control environmental effects, preserve natural resources, and encourage planning for future use of the site. The majority of reclamation takes place after mining has ceased, although progressive reclamation occurs during operations.

As part of the NorthMet Mining Project, PolyMet would perform reclamation during mine operations, closure and post closure. These activities would include, among others:

- Mining in a manner that creates areas that can be reclaimed as soon after initiation of the operation as practical;
- Demolishing buildings and removing equipment;
- Capturing and treating affected water using mechanical methods, unless and until the company demonstrates a successful passive alternative;
- Wetland mitigation using wetland bank credits, as appropriate;
- Rock storage pile reclamation, including placement of waste rock with the greatest potential for chemical reaction back into the mine pit, and submerging it underwater to minimize exposure to oxygen and reduce the potential for chemical reaction;
- Constructing various cover systems to minimize exposure of, and water seepage into, the waste rock stockpiles, tailings basin, and hydrometallurgical residue facility;
- Managing stormwater to minimize erosion and stormwater flow off-site;
- Planting vegetation at disturbed areas to control erosion, screen mining areas from noncompatible uses, and provide for subsequent land uses such as wildlife habitat, timber production, and recreation; and
- Monitoring and maintaining surrounding bodies of water, wetlands, vegetation, and other features of the environment.

Reclamation activities would be reported and reviewed on a yearly basis under the conditions of the draft permit to mine. The review would include past and future activities and contingency reclamation plans if mine operations were to cease in the coming year. Reclamation activities would be funded by the permittee and guaranteed through financial assurance.